

Approved

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, March 3, 2016

Diamondback Terrapin, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair John Becker, Steve Cardon, Amanda Matheny, Clark Reed, Lea Rosenbohm, Steve Sprague, Helen Triolo, and Fedon Vayanis.

Commissioners Absent: Alicia Hosmer

Council Liaison: Mark Pierzchala

City Staff: Erica Shingara (Environmental Management)

Guests: None

Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:08 pm by Chair Becker. The Commission welcomed the new Council liaison, Councilmember Mark Pierzchala, and the new Commissioner, Fedon Vayanis.

Chair Recognition

The Commission recognized Clark Reed for his dedication and service as Chair of the Environment Commission from October 2012 to March 2016.

Meeting Agenda Review and Revision

With no changes to the agenda, Commissioner Cardon moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Cardon moved and Commissioner Rosenbohm seconded a motion to approve the February 4, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion passed 7-0-1 (Commissioner Vayanis abstained due to absence from the February meeting).

Environmental Excellence Awards

The Commission reviewed nominations for Environmental Excellence Awards:

1. Commissioner Cardon presented the posthumous nomination of James Farrelly for Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices. The Commission recognized that Mr. Farrelly and his wife Anne Goodman received an Environmental Excellence Award in 2010 for promoting sustainable gardening practices and their working toward certifying Rockville as a National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat. The Commission discussed Mr. Farrelly's environmental service since 2010; including volunteering at Pope Farm Nursery in Montgomery County, Croydon Creek Nature Center in Rockville, and Rockville Science Day. He also helped to get plants donated to create a new native garden at the Nature Center. Commissioner Cardon moved and Commissioner Matheny seconded the motion to recommend James Farrelly for a posthumous Environmental Excellence Award for his outstanding leadership in environmental practices. The motion passed 8-0.

2. The City received a nomination for the Solar Working Group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville (UUCR) for Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices. The group spent extensive time researching financing models, educating the congregation, and ultimately obtaining approval to install a 32 kW solar system that meets 30 percent of their energy needs. UUCR is the third of four congregations in Montgomery County to go solar. Due to a potential permit compliance issue on their property, this nomination was put on hold.
3. The Commission noted that Peerless Rockville nominated the passive house at 214 Harrison Street for an award last year. While the Environment Commission thought this was a strong application, they wanted energy performance data to demonstrate the energy savings achieved through this innovative design. Now that the house has been in operation for a year, the Commission requested that staff contact them for energy data to supplement their nomination.

Hometown Holidays Planning (May 28/29 from 2-8 p.m.)

Commissioner Rosenbohm discussed the arrangements for booth volunteers, materials and equipment for Hometown Holidays. This year, the Commission will need to program the booth on both Saturday and Sunday and electricity will not be available. The Commission discussed staffing the booth from 2 to 8 p.m. on Sunday. The Commission plans to raffle a rain barrel; run the prize wheel and recycling give-aways; present the watershed model; provide solar assessments; and was requested by EMD to assist with mosquito prevention outreach. The Commission identified possible partners to invite to share the booth on Sunday: RBAC and the Rockville Solar Co-op.

- **Action Item:** Chair Becker will email RBAC an invitation to share the booth on Sunday (and cc Councilmember Pierzchala).
- **Action Item:** Chair Becker and Commission Reed will email the Solar Co-op an invitation to share the booth on Sunday.
- **Action Item:** Commissioner Rosenbohm will send out a volunteer sign-up from 1:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday and identify leaders for set up and clean up.
- **Action Item:** Erica Shingara will contact Special Events for other possible booth partners and confirm the size of table.
- **Action Item:** Commissioner Cardon will send out spreadsheet to vote on outreach items to order in April.

Council Liaison

- Councilmember Mark Pierzchala provided several updates on the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council will be conducting several FY 2017 budget work sessions and public hearings in March and April (visit www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=951). Craig Simoneau will serve as the Acting City Manager while the Mayor and Council begin a national search for a new City Manager. The Mayor and Council will begin interviews for the City Clerk position. He also noted that he is walking and photo documenting every street, school, and park (both stream valleys, active areas and forests) in the City. He invited the Commission to join him on the stream walks.
- The Commission inquired if the Mayor and Council would be considering any changes to the forest and tree protection ordinance. This item is not currently on the schedule.

Committee Reports

- ***Energy Committee:*** Clark Reed described Maryland Legislation on Clean Energy Jobs-Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Revisions and requested that the Commission consider advocating for this legislation. The Clean Energy Jobs Act was filed under two separate Senate Bills, SB 1014 and SB 921, and House Bill 1106. SB 1014 was withdrawn because it mirrored SB 921. It was noted that the public hearings for the bills are scheduled for 3/3 and 3/8 and that there is not a Mayor and Council on Monday (3/7). Clark moved that the Rockville Environment Commission attend Community Forum on March 14 to request the Mayor and Council consider supporting SB 921 and HB 1106, either in writing or in testimony. Commissioner Triolo seconded the motion. The Commission discussed the content of the bills, the potential environmental benefits, and the potential increases in electricity costs for Rockville residents and City operations. The motion passed (5-3).

The Energy Committee would like the Commission and the City to partner with Maryland Sun to host a Solar Co-op party at the Glenview Mansion in April to celebrate the co-op's success. Erica Shingara noted that the City has already started to promote several activities planned for April's Earth Month and suggested holding a party in May or June to provide more time for planning and promotion and to determine if there will be another co-op in the future. She noted that the Mansion may charge for the venue because of revenue recovery efforts.

- **Action Item:** Erica Shingara will check available dates and costs at the Glenview Mansion or Croyden Creek Nature Center for a solar co-op party.
- ***Composting and Recycling:*** Commissioner Rosenbohm reported that the Sierra Club attended that last Committee meeting to discuss the proposed bottle bill; however, the Committee did not endorse supporting the bill.
- ***Watershed Protection:*** Commissioner Matheny reported that the Committee is planning to visit several communities for outreach and education on the Rainscapes Rewards and Community Backyard Habitats programs. In April, they are planning to present information to the Americana Center and East Rockville. They are also planning the April 16th Maryvale stream cleanup.
- ***Sustainability:*** Commissioner Becker reported that the Committee is planning to attend the future public forum meetings for the Comprehensive Master Plan update.

Environment Management Division Update

Erica Shingara reviewed upcoming events and projects:

- Volunteers are needed to attend the 3/14 Mayor and Council meeting to accept the Earth Month and Earth Hour proclamation.
 - **Action Item:** Commissioners Rosenbohm and Triolo volunteered to accept the proclamation.
- The City will be partnering with Montgomery County, WSSC and other agencies to host the H2O Summit on March 5th at the Rockville Senior Center. The public is invited to attend to learn about water quality and ways to get involved. Information is available at: <https://mygreenmontgomery.org/h2osummit>
- The City is planning a series of activities to celebrate Earth Month in April. Details will be included in the March and April Rockville Reports. As part of Earth Month, the City is advertising for volunteers for the Commission's Maryvale Stream Cleanup on April 16.
- SolarCity will begin their site audits for the Gude solar project.

- The City is coordinating with the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Mosquito Control Program and Montgomery County on early cooperative mosquito prevention planning.
- Staff is editing amendments to the Floodplain Ordinance to comply with new FEMA requirements. The amendments are currently being reviewed by MDE and FEMA. It is anticipated that this ordinance will be brought to the Commission for review in May.

New Business

- Councilmember Pierzchala inquired about the status of the Montgomery College Environmental Excellence Award nomination from several years ago. EMD will follow up on the history.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 9:02 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The Commission will tentatively meeting on **Thursday, April 7, 2015 at 7:00 pm** in the **Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville Maryland 20850-2321**. The public is invited to attend.